



Department of Energy

Washington, DC 20585

August 18, 1998

Dear Interested Party:

The first enclosure to this letter is the *Summary of the Final Environmental Impact Statement on Management of Certain Plutonium Residues and Scrub Alloy Stored at Rocky Flats Environmental Technology Site* (DOE/EIS-0277F, August 1998). This Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) has been prepared in accordance with requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to consider the potential impacts of alternatives for management of certain plutonium residues and all of the scrub alloy stored at the Rocky Flats Environmental Technology Site (Rocky Flats) to meet requirements for disposal or other disposition.

The Final EIS identifies preferred processing technologies for each category of material within the scope of the EIS, and includes activities that would be accomplished at three DOE sites. Under the preferred alternative, most of the material (88%) would be processed at Rocky Flats near Golden, Colorado and the remainder at the Savannah River Site near Aiken, South Carolina (10%) and Los Alamos National Laboratory in Los Alamos, New Mexico (2%). The analyses in the EIS demonstrate that the potential impacts on the environment, workers, and general public of implementing any of the alternatives evaluated in the Final EIS (including the preferred alternative) would be small and within applicable state and federal regulatory limits.

The alternatives analyzed in the Final EIS were either analyzed in the Draft EIS or are composed of elements of alternatives analyzed in the Draft EIS. For materials for which the preferred processing technology was not addressed in the Draft EIS in the same manner as it appears in the Final EIS, or for which any variances to safeguards termination limits had not been granted at the time the Draft EIS was issued, DOE is providing a 45-day comment period. The second enclosure to this letter identifies the material categories that are covered by the 45-day public comment period and explains how the public can submit comments.

To accommodate the 45-day comment period, DOE will issue Records of Decision (ROD) for this Final EIS in sequence. The first ROD will be issued no sooner than 30 days after issuance of the Final EIS and will address only materials not covered in the public comment period (i.e., those for which the preferred processing technology was specifically analyzed in the Draft EIS, and for which any necessary variances to safeguards termination limits had been granted at the time the Draft EIS was issued). The second ROD will be issued after the comment period has closed, and any additional comments have been considered and addressed, as appropriate.

The complete Final EIS is available for review in public reading rooms at the addresses listed at the end of the *Summary*. You may also obtain a copy of the entire Final EIS by telephoning the Center for Environmental Management Information at 1-800-736-3282 (or, in Washington, D.C., at 202-863-5084). The Final EIS will be available on DOE's NEPA website at <http://tis.eh.doe.gov/nepa>. The Environmental Management website will also contain the EIS summary at <http://www.em.doe.gov>.

Sincerely,

James M. Owendoff
Acting Assistant Secretary for
Environmental Management

Enclosures



PUBLIC COMMENT NOTICE

ADDITIONAL 45-DAY COMMENT PERIOD ON PORTIONS OF THE *FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT ON MANAGEMENT OF CERTAIN PLUTONIUM RESIDUES AND SCRUB ALLOY STORED AT THE ROCKY FLATS ENVIRONMENTAL TECHNOLOGY SITE*

The Department of Energy (DOE) is inviting public comment on DOE's preferred alternative for management of the following plutonium residue categories, as described in the *Final Environmental Impact Statement on Management of Certain Plutonium Residues and Scrub Alloy Stored at the Rocky Flats Environmental Technology Site* (DOE/EIS-0277F of August 1998):

Residue Category	Preferred Alternative
Incinerator Ash Residues	Repackage at Rocky Flats (Alternative 4)
Graphite Fine Residues	Repackage at Rocky Flats (Alternative 4)
Inorganic Ash Residues	Repackage at Rocky Flats (Alternative 4)
Molten Salt Extraction/ Electrorefining Salt Residues	Pyro-oxidize, if necessary, and repackage at Rocky Flats (Alternative 4)
Direct Oxide Reduction Salt Residues (Item Description Codes 365, 413, 417 and 427)	Acid Dissolution at Los Alamos National Laboratory (Alternative 3); or Pyro-oxidize, if necessary, and repackage at Rocky Flats (Alternative 4)
HEPA Filter Media Residues	Neutralize and dry, if necessary, and repackage at Rocky Flats (Alternative 4)
Sludge Residues	Filter and dry, if necessary, and repackage at Rocky Flats (Alternative 4)

At the end of the 45-day comment period (which will begin with publication of the Notice of Availability of the Final EIS in the *Federal Register* by the Environmental Protection Agency [expected around August 28, 1998]), DOE will determine whether any comments have been received that raise issues requiring further analysis. If DOE determines that no further analysis is required, DOE will issue a second Record of Decision specifying its decisions for management of the material categories listed above. The second Record of Decision would include DOE's responses to any comments received from the public.

Alternatively, if DOE decides upon consideration of the public comments that further analysis is required before a second Record of Decision can be issued, DOE will so inform the public.

Written comments should be sent to:

Charles R. Head, Senior Technical Advisor
Office of Nuclear Material and Facility Stabilization (EM-60)
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20585

Or to Mr. Head at one of the following:

Fax: 202-586-5393 or E-mail: RFPR.EIS@em.doe.gov

COVER SHEET

Responsible Agency: United States Department of Energy (DOE)

Title: Final Environmental Impact Statement on Management of Certain Plutonium Residues and Scrub Alloy Stored at the Rocky Flats Environmental Technology Site

Contact: For further information, or to submit comments concerning this Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), contact:

Charles Head, Senior Technical Advisor
Office of Nuclear Material and Facility Stabilization (EM-60)
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20585
Telephone: 202-586-5151 ■ Fax: 202-586-5393 ■ E-Mail: RFPR.EIS@em.doe.gov

For general information on DOE's National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, contact:

Carol Borgstrom, Director
Office of NEPA Policy and Assistance (EH-42)
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20585
Telephone: 202-586-4600 or leave a message at 1-800-472-2756

Abstract: DOE proposes to process certain plutonium-bearing materials being stored at the Rocky Flats Environmental Technology Site (Rocky Flats) located near Golden, Colorado. These materials are plutonium residues and scrub alloy remaining from nuclear weapons manufacturing operations formerly conducted by DOE at this site. Processing is needed to address immediate health and safety concerns regarding storage of the materials, as raised by the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board in Recommendation 94-1, and to prepare the materials for offsite disposal or other disposition. These actions would be taken in a manner that supports Rocky Flats site closure and limits worker exposure and waste production. Disposal or other disposition would eliminate health and safety concerns associated with indefinite storage of these materials.

DOE has identified and assessed four alternatives for processing these plutonium-bearing materials: (1) *No Action*, (2) *Processing without Plutonium Separation*, (3) *Processing with Plutonium Separation*, and (4) *Combination of Processing Technologies*. Under the *No Action Alternative*, DOE would stabilize the materials for safe interim storage at Rocky Flats. Under the *Processing without Plutonium Separation Alternative*, DOE would conduct more extensive operations at Rocky Flats to process the materials for disposal using technologies such as immobilization or blend-down. Under the *Processing with Plutonium Separation Alternative*, DOE would remove most of the plutonium from the plutonium-bearing materials in preparation for disposal and would manage the separated plutonium in accordance with decisions to be reached after completion of the Surplus Plutonium Disposition Environmental Impact Statement. Rocky Flats, the Savannah River Site, and Los Alamos National Laboratory are identified as potential sites for processing with plutonium separation. Any plutonium resulting from separation processes would be placed in safe and secure storage pending disposition. Under the *Combination of Processing Technologies Alternative*, DOE would process certain residues using elements of technologies analyzed under Alternatives 1 and 2, and would apply a variance from safeguards termination limits to certain plutonium residues to allow disposal after they are stabilized and/or repackaged.

Public Comment: In preparing the Final EIS, DOE considered comments received by mail, fax, Internet, and orally at public hearings. Public hearings were held in December 1997 near Rocky Flats, the Savannah River Site, and Los Alamos National Laboratory. The public has an additional 45-day opportunity to comment on materials identified in Section 1.5.2 of this Summary.